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SOCIAL SCIENCE AND THE CURRICULUM.

ROUSSEAU looked back longingly to the days when prehistoric men lived in primal virtue a happy and blameless life. In somewhat the same way, when we confront the complex and baffling problems of today, we think enviously of the simple existence of our primitive ancestors. They held neither convention nor institute. They were innocent of round tables. They solved the puzzles of life one by one as best they could, but they reflected little on their aims and methods. The education which they gave their children fitted them for the life of the group. The simple sum of social knowledge was easily communicated. The primitive dexterities, handicrafts, and social virtues were passed on chiefly by contact of children with parents. Where each man knew all there was to know, and could do all that anyone did, education was relatively simple. But as knowledge and dexterity increased, they came to overburden single minds; division of labor, intellectual as well as manual, began. Primitive philosophy became the province of the "medicine men," whose successors are the philosophers, theologians, scientists, preachers, and teachers of today.

With the centuries the growing mass of human knowledge has been more and more minutely subdivided; man's world has been resolved into its elements. But along with this analysis has always gone the effort to patch the pieces together, to keep man's experience whole. This great antithesis appears in our current educational theory and practice. On the one hand, we find the constant pressure of new subjects which clamor for admission to the curriculum; on the other hand, we hear the cry for correlation, co-ordination, concentration. It is urged that the life of the child must not be broken up into unrelated fragments; that all these artificially divided studies must be related and kept in unity in the child's growing mind.

Still another tendency asserts itself. We hear much in these days of "the social aspects of education," of "the sociological

basis of education," of "the school as a community," and of "school and society." If one may risk the interpretation of vague movements of thought such as these, I venture to assert that this social tendency of education is only another aspect of the inevitable process by which men struggle to see things whole. The conception of the origin and development of the nature and end of society sweeps into unity all the fragmentary knowledge of mankind. The socializing of education, then, is an effort to give pupils, little by little, a way of looking at society which shall enable them gradually to see things in their relations, to order conduct, and to contribute something to the stability and enrichment of the life they live in common with their fellows.

Those who cultivate history, economics, politics, anthropology, and sociology, and who believe that social science in a large sense has an all important rôle to play in education, are naturally concerned to know what relation these studies may sustain to the elementary and secondary schools. They know that these subjects are at present almost wholly university pursuits, but they remember that certain of the studies which in recent years have crept into the high school and the grades have made their way downward from the institutions of higher learning. The study of science affords a conspicuous illustration. Geology and botany, zoölogy and physiology, gradually lose their identity as they are traced through the high school down into the grades, where they merge into the undifferentiated protoplasm called "nature study." This process may well serve as a model to those who are anxious to see the social sciences influence the earlier years of the school. And yet I fancy that none of these social scientists, with all their desire to gain admission to the grades, wish to increase the number of subjects now included in that interesting mosaic known as the common-school curriculum. They simply ask for a larger interpretation of the subjects which are now taught, or, perhaps better, the use of these subjects, enriched in some degree, as vehicles of social knowledge and ideals.

Education is essentially a socializing process. Every group

educates its members by many devices. This education is always going on. The school is only one agency of this process, and it must adjust its aims and methods to the great social forces which are molding the young in a multiplicity of ways. A study of the social sciences suggests to those who control the schools the principles which must be followed, as well as the materials of instruction and inspiration by which the development of the young into socialized citizens may be furthered.

Social science has already a place in the curriculum. Almost every subject now taught has its social aspects, and these are in many cases emphasized. But not until the teacher looks at these subjects from the point of view of social science can the curriculum yield its richest results in knowledge and character. The plea I have to make, then, is not a plea for anthropology in the second or third grades, nor a demand for sociology in the high school, but an urgent appeal for the unifying of the curriculum by a social philosophy concealed in the lower stages from the pupils, but clearly present in the mind of the teacher.

Let us trace for a moment the inevitable process by which knowledge grows with advancing years in the mind of the child. In the first stage we have the isolated bits of knowledge, related here and there, and now and then to the shifting interests of the young mind; the story complete in itself, the fact or explanation which solves the problem of the moment. The eager growing mind stores itself with these fragmentary, fascinating things. Then follows the stage in which small groups of these interesting images are brought into relationship. The exhilaration which comes with this putting of things together is known to every teacher. Gradually the process grows wider and more definite. The smaller groups of fact are merged in ever larger and more significant unities, until finally, with the upper grades and the high school, the period of systematic reflection dawns. The earlier experiences of childhood are re-read and re-interpreted in the light of the larger knowledge. Generalization in its legitimate form is made possible by the preparation of the earlier years. It is thus that nature study in the kindergarten and in the lower grades is gradually organized into the "ologies" of

high school and college. In similar fashion the social scientist demands for children the concrete knowledge and experiences out of which, in due time, logical sciences and practical wisdom may develop.

In providing appropriate materials, two aims must be kept constantly in mind: the genuine interests of the child at different stages of his growth, and the maturer view of life toward which this growth is to be guided. The child's interests are at first supreme, but even if this be granted, there are choices of appropriate facts and occupations, and these choices must be determined by the ultimate end in view.

The socializing movement is well under way. In kindergarten and elementary school social materials have long been recognized. The simple industrial processes of weaving, clay-modeling, woodworking, and food preparation have been utilized, but in rather too conventionalized a way. We note in Professor John Dewey's theory and practice the beginnings of a movement back to nature, or rather back to primitive manufacture. Children weave baskets rather than paper mats. They mold pottery rather than balls and cubes. They make looms and wagons and houses rather than conventional elements of carpentry. They cook food for actual use instead of making premature experiments in physics and chemistry. Thus manual training may be socialized in the sense that it may be brought closer to social life and its actual activities, past and present. In later stages it becomes inevitably and properly more conventionalized, specialized, and precise.

About these industrial processes naturally gather ideas as to the utilizing of raw materials, the working of them into finished products, the comparison of crude, primitive processes with the highly organized production of today. It is impossible to deal with these topics without grouping about them many facts of social and industrial history; thus the idea of change in human affairs, the ideas of organized industry and of commerce gradually emerge from these activities and interests of the early grades.

It may be remarked in passing that we may well question

the value of economics in the high school, so long as the lower grades are not supplying the elementary ideas which economic science generalizes and arranges in logical form. But in the investigation of industry and commerce, great facts of diversified natural conditions, of mineral resources, of agricultural products, of varying climates, of transportation by land and sea, are inevitably involved.

Geography is being vitalized by this contact with human life and institutions. It is no longer an isolated and dull pursuit. It becomes a study of man's home, the scene of his conquests. The influence of natural conditions on the industry and life of man becomes a fascinating topic. The determining effect of mountain and plain, of river and pass, on the course of history, emerges from one concrete illustration after another. On the other hand, geography is only another aspect of nature study. The lives of plant and insect, bird and beast, take on new meaning when their stories are told in relation to their environment and to mankind. The work of Colonel Francis W. Parker and his staff has demonstrated the value of socialized geography in relating all the subjects of the program.

The formal pursuits of the curriculum, so called, lend themselves readily to the social point of view. The reading-book will undoubtedly become more and more the vehicle of appropriate descriptions and anecdotes which bear upon social life. Much of the old literature will remain, but some of it is already being replaced by stories of primitive life, of typical industrial processes, and tales and songs not only of past heroism, but of duty bravely done today.

It is needless to indicate the ways in which number work is now related to manual training, history, geography, nature study, and other subjects of the school program.

But to the study within the school must be added the visiting of industries and other institutions, As a matter of course, the teacher of nature study sends her pupils afield for material or accompanies them on expeditions into wood and meadow. A few wise teachers are in the same way making the mill, the railway shop, the factory, the power-house, the post-office, the

press-room, the fire station, definite means of instruction for their pupils. There is no more common blunder than to suppose that the everyday life of the community is understood or interpreted by its citizens. The increasing use of stereopticon and slides will not only enrich the study of history, geography, and science, but will add vastly to the means of instruction in industrial and institutional life. Sets of slides will trace the progress of iron ore and coal into steel, of cotton plant and wool into cloth, and will show the men and machinery at work in mine and mill, in field and factory. The lantern will display rural life to city children, and in turn carry these urban pupils into the country. The interests of growing children may be easily guided in such a way that they will appropriate a great mass of material concerning the institutional life of their social group. This will be of value at the time. It will serve as a means of genuine education, and later on will give deeper insight into the nature of social forces.

As pupils advance through the upper grades into the secondary school, history and literature, in conjunction with geography and science, furnish the best instruments of social instruction. History enriched by some knowledge of primitive life, some conception of economic organization and its influence on men, will become more than the records of battles and dynasties. The idea of social change, of cause and effect in history, may be more and more consciously introduced and discussed. The past must be to a large extent interpreted in terms of the present. The characters and deeds of Greeks and Romans, of Teutons and Franks, can be understood only by those who have some insight into the universal motives of mankind. The attempt to imagine the past will be futile or feeble on the part of those whose activities and interests in the present have been narrowed and formalized. The child who has made a basket or woven a tiny blanket can reproduce more vividly the life of the American frontier than one who has known nothing of such tasks.

The annals of the pupil's own family as an aid to the study of history have been almost wholly overlooked. The earliest

ideas of change and continuity in human affairs the child gains at the knee of father or mother. "Tell me a story about when you were a little boy," is the familiar formula. The story of life when parents were young is full of fascination for the child. The still remoter chronicles of grandfather and grandmother fill him with wonder over the lapse of time; while his small imagination fairly breaks down as it tries to conceive the life of great-grandparents and other dimly distant ancestors. The study of family histories and reports upon them in the school may be made points of departure in the lower grades for numberless excursions in geography, in the history of the westward migration of population in the United States, in the means of transportation, and in the housing and the industries of the frontier. Where the pupils' families are quickly traced back over sea, the longer journeys and the wider relationships are full of suggestions. One refrains from details which have no place in what must be a brief survey of so wide a field. Enough has perhaps been indicated to emphasize the principles involved.

Literature as a means of social instruction has inexhaustible possibilities. The conception of literature as a product, an expression, of social life can be developed. Language itself thought of as a social growth takes on new meaning. The interpretation of a piece of great literature, the reading into it of men's motives, the asking, "Is it true to life?" start fruitful inquiry and illuminating discussion. A careful reading with a class of one of Emerson's essays is a lesson in psychology, in ethics, in history, in language, in literature all at once—and, what is noteworthy, the pupils never suspect that these profound names are lurking beneath the delightful exercise.

The value of the problem in instruction has been fairly recognized in mathematics, physics, and chemistry, but in less exact subjects it has been too much neglected. After all, the real test, if not the best means, of "correlation" is problem-solving—the bringing to bear of all the necessary elements of knowledge upon a given concrete situation. The possibilities of problem-setting are being studied. It is not utopian to set social problems, to describe situations, and to invite solutions.

The teacher with a sand box and a few toy houses may set the problem of building a village which shall have houses, schools, churches, factories, stores, etc., appropriate for a specified population in an environment and with transportation facilities indicated at the outset. The discussions and criticisms involved in such a task could not fail to be fruitful. This is only a suggestion of the devices available for stimulating reflection upon the various aspects of social life.

So far stress has been laid upon instruction, upon gaining insight into the nature of social organization; but education is more than instruction. Unless the pupil from all his study of industry and nature, of geography and commerce, of history and literature, gathers appropriate sentiments, selects worthy types of personality and conduct, comes to respond with bounding pulses to the best ideals of personal development, of social service, of loyalty to country, of devotion to righteousness, the whole effort has been futile. Knowledge which is not transmuted into character is abortive.

Yet the problem of moral education is baffling. The dogmatic teaching of virtue is all but hopeless. Ideals are assimilated from the community in so subtle a way that it seems almost impossible to control the individual's development. The teaching of formal ethics comes at a later stage of reflection, and it is a question whether moral philosophy in college has much effect upon character.

The real task is to influence those instinctive, unreflective approvals and disapprovals with which the individual looks upon men and conduct. There are virtues which our times demand, which it is hard to cultivate. A high ideal of commercial honor, a passion for truth and tolerance, an admiration for political integrity, a deep sense of civic duty, are not unhampered growths in a society like ours.

The idea of self-government in our schools arouses interest. The autocracy of the schoolroom seems an ill preparation for life in a democracy. The experiment of self-control is worth trying, and there is reason to hope for valuable results, but we are not surprised to learn that the ethical standard of the out-

side community often dominates the school. The "ring" or "machine," favoritism, gross partisanship, wire-pulling, log-rolling often find their way into the student government. To arouse feeling among the pupils against forms of conduct which are tolerated, or secretly, if not openly, admired in the outside world, is a difficult and delicate task.

But little by little through the years, if the right materials are gathered, if sound and sane suggestions come from personalities which inspire respect and affection, these higher impulses may be strengthened into stable virtues. History and literature and life must be searched for noble personalities and high types of conduct, and these must be held up for admiration and emulation wisely, persistently, untiringly. In the earlier years, discussion and analysis have little place. The emotions come without conscious reflection. Later, comparison and debate, if they do not degenerate into arid dialectic, serve a useful purpose. But the emphasis in the socializing of education should rest upon the early stages where character is laid down in emotional valuations of man and morality.

It is in this field of moral education that I would emphasize the plea, which Professor Patten made some years ago, for contemporary heroes. Let pupils search the press and the community for high types of conduct. The fireman, the railway engineer, the life-saver, the miner, the factory hand, the reformer, the philanthropist of today aid the formation of ideals no less than mediæval crusaders or the heroes of Greece and Rome. There are virtues universal, virtues of purity and courage, of loyalty and self-sacrifice, admirable in all lands and in all ages; but these virtues are interpreted by every people and every epoch. The virtues of the past must be translated into those of the present. As abstract virtues they are lifeless things; they must be incarnated in personalities before they can have power over the young. Here literature and life lend their aid.

The great problem of American education, then, is the problem of making better citizens. Even to state this is to perpetrate a platitude, to obtrude the obvious. But the solution of the problem lies in bringing the school into closer relation

with life. The studies which have been too far abstracted from human experience must be brought back again into contact with the concrete social experience from which they sprang. The highest ideals of co-operation, loyalty, sacrifice, which men have wrought out in the past and present must live again in the personalities of the young. Only mature life can see the full development of character, but the socialized school, under the guidance of a high-minded teacher who sees life whole, may render unvaluable service.

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